



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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For Immediate Release
July 22, 2010

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DEQ arrests Opelousas man for multiple violations of environmental permits in St. Landry Parish

BATON ROUGE – Today, investigators with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Criminal Investigation Division arrested an Opelousas man on 12 felony charges involving criminal violations of Plaisance Development Corporation's water discharge permits in St. Landry Parish.

The president of Plaisance Development Corporation, Joseph L. Jones, 58, operates six wastewater treatment plants in St. Landry Parish, as well as, six wastewater treatment plants in Evangeline Parish. Jones is alleged to have knowingly violated PDC's Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit by not providing monitoring results, causing or allowing unpermitted discharges, and failing to provide proper operation and maintenance for the facilities operated in St. Landry Parish.

Jones has been also been charged with 15 felony counts in Evangeline Parish for knowing violations of Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System at PDC's Evangeline facilities. His trial is set for September 27, 2010.

"Knowing violations of the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System are felonies. We will continue to work with our federal partners at EPA-CID to address individuals and companies who knowingly violate their permit conditions" said Jeffrey T. Nolan, Manager of LDEQ-CID.

Violations of LPDES permit provisions, upon conviction, can result in a fine of not less than \$5,000, but no more than \$50,000 per day of violation, or imprisonment for not more than three years, with or without hard labor, or both. Both Jones and Plaisance Development Corporation face the same felony charges.

PDC also faces civil penalties for violations relating to his water discharge permit.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.

An arrest does not constitute guilt in a criminal case and all subjects are presumed innocent. . All evidence compiled during the investigation is presented to the area prosecutors who determine if formal charges are warranted.